

R England - Treaties, etc. - II

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# V I E W

*Lord* OF THE *Intelligencer*

## TREATY OF COMMERCE

WITH

## F R A N C E:

Signed at VERSAILLES, September 20, 1786,

BY

M R. E D E N.

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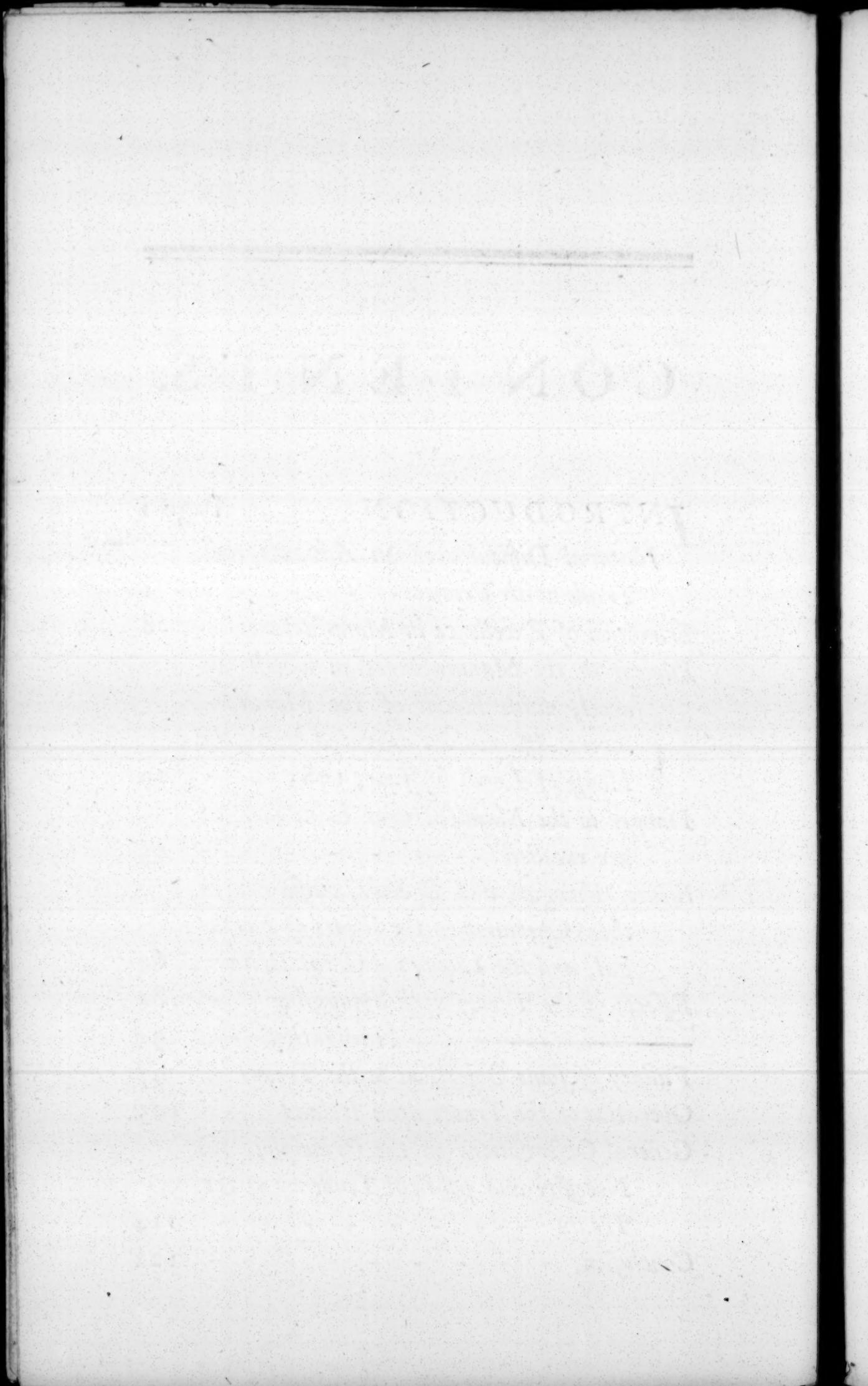


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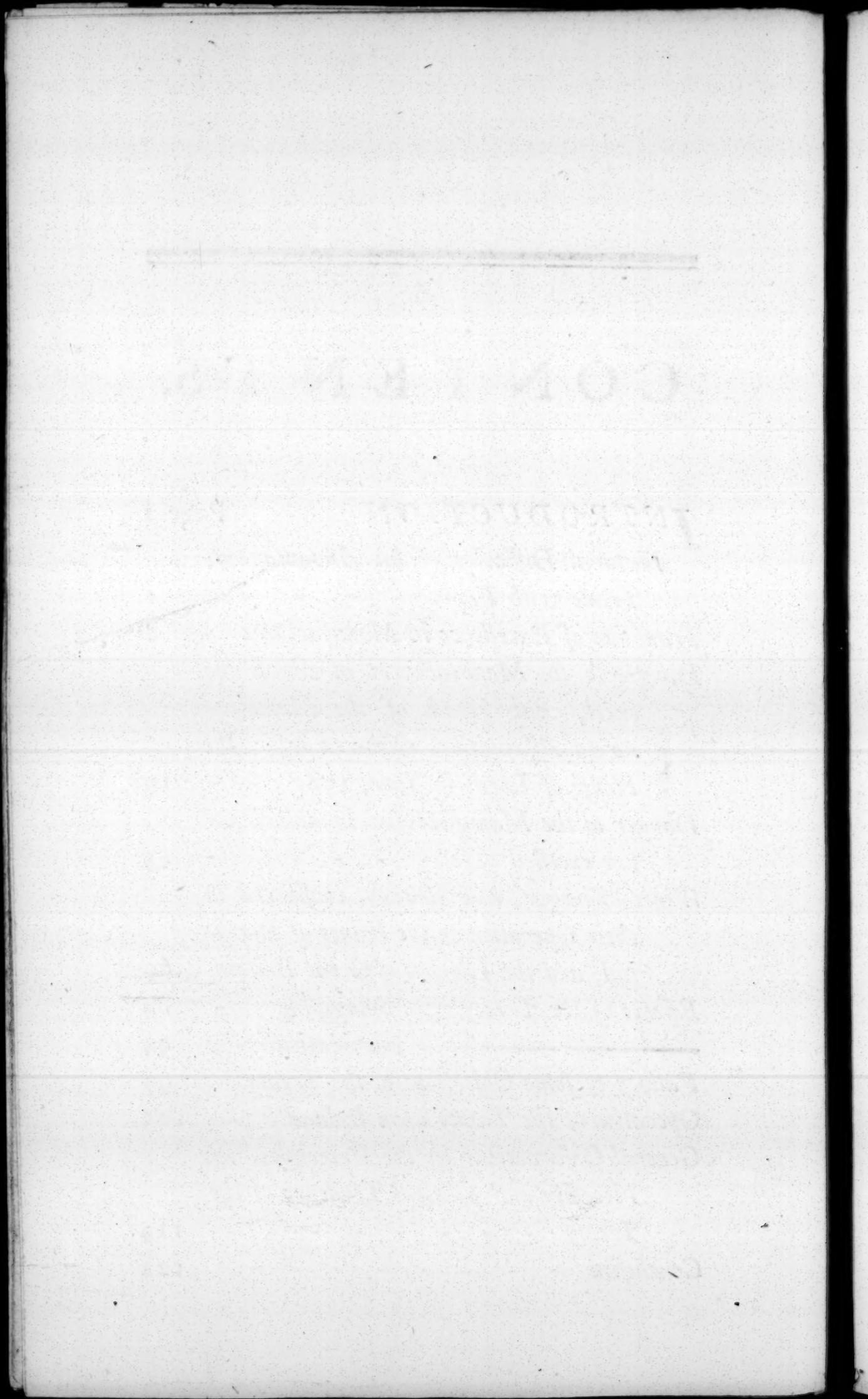


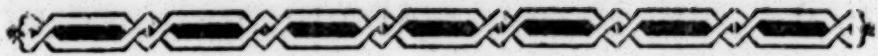
## *INTRODUCTION.*

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THE treaty of commerce negotiated by Mr. Eden, has furnished matter for a display of no slight portion, perhaps on both sides of the question, of that bitter spirit of recrimination and retort for evil motives, which is too much the custom of those who are in common habits of opposing each other. Sharp invectives upon any serious discussion never fail to provoke the reprobation of cool

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men ; but to lessen the importance of one of the greatest objects that ever challenged the notice of the nation, by this sort of ill-manners and intemperance, is a conduct indecent in a high degree and absolutely criminal.—It is betraying a consciousness that all is not right, if the supporters of this treaty shew a foreness and impatience upon a tranquil and cool investigation of its merits ; whilst, on the other hand, nothing but contempt can result from the efforts of its opponents, should they, instead of proving the defects of the measure itself, manifest nothing but a sense of rancour and resentment against the persons who have accomplished it. Subordinates, however, go much farther in political warfare than superiors ; and nothing is more unjust and illiberal

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illiberal, than charging, upon the leaders or principal people of either side, any great share of the violence, the lies and ribbaldry, which, though echoed every day, produce in the public mind no other sentiments than those of disgust or abhorrence.

In each of the parties that divide the nation, (without considering which side boasts the superiority of virtue, ability, or reputation) there are undoubtedly men of sufficient integrity, talents, and character, to warrant this belief—that the ministry did not constitute this treaty for the purpose of deliberately destroying this empire, even though it should be proved capable of such an effect; and that the opposition, in mere enmity to their adversaries, will not

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be so base as to prevent the nation from enjoying the blessings it brings, if in reality it should be found wise and salutary. This admission (which, however, no way supersedes a possibility of corruption in any individual) evidently supposes the subject divested from, as indeed it is, and much transcending all party considerations.

Other questions may with safety be turned into trials of strength ; but the source, the essence of our national consequence never can be profaned to such little ends ; for surely, the ruin of our trade, which would involve the ruin of all the parties in the country, would be agreeable to none of them.

In making plausible professions, there is so much facility, and a few sounding

## INTRODUCTION. ▾

ing words can be set down with so much ease ; that the writer can hardly venture to say a syllable of himself. Patriotism and love of country are indeed capable of being urged without any difficulty ; yet, surely, such declamations, whether true or false, discover nothing but either the writer's weakness, or a design upon the reader's understanding, which he supposes liable to imposition by any such shallow pretence. Entertaining, therefore, a reasonable degree of respect for the common sense of men, the writer of this pamphlet refers for his motives in this little work, to the contents of the work itself, and not to any specious professions on his own part ; following however, that reference with this declaration—that if, in any instance in the course of the in-

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investigation, sinister views or party objects are found to predominate, in preference to national interest and the public good—if any fact or argument that makes against his system, be willingly suppressed or evaded ;—or any that favour it, be exaggerated, or stretched beyond their due bearing ; the writer forfeits, if convicted of these faults, all credit with his readers for the merit of every other part of the publication.

That everything here shall be original or very agreeable, is not at all affected, and should not in reason be looked for. A subject which falls not within the sphere of ordinary acquirement ; to the due knowledge of which, a warehouse is more useful than a library, and a clothier a better authority than a clafs,

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sic: affords no opportunity for either the invention of genius, or the embellishments of art. Public curiosity however, should not be deterred or deadened by this consideration. In the whole realm, there is not one person of any age or sex whom this treaty does not deeply concern, and should not sensibly interest. Our national wealth, our weight in the scale of empires, the employment of our people, the product of our lands, and every thing we have either of comfort or of glory, are blended with our trade, and inseparable from it. Nor should any person be indifferent to it, by the fear of its being either too intricate or abstruse. The obscurities of this, like many meaner and many nobler sciences, consists more in the barbarous jargon, the technical

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nical ambiguity, and pitiful craft of its professors, than any absolute mystery in the science itself. Ornament indeed, and decoration, are upon such an occasion, utterly impossible ; but the subject is not therefore dark or mystical : and to this the writer pledges himself—that though he cannot entertain, he shall make himself understood.



VIEW

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*Natural Difficulty of an Advantageous  
Trade with France.*

WAVING the abstract question,— whether there are not nations so placed on the globe, and so constituted by nature, as to defie the force of human skill in forming a commercial connection of reciprocal benefit between them; let us see at once if between France and England such a connection is possible or practicable. France has for a staple, the manufactures of wine, brandy, vinegar, oil, &c.; these are blessings peculiar to her, which all the labour of all the men in England can never obtain or establish here: for the same providence that bestowed them upon the one, denied them to the other nation. The system of luxury in

Great Britain renders these articles an object of extraordinary magnitude to the commerce of France, and they form a physical superiority to the prejudice of England; unless it appears that England possesses some local advantage to tally against it, by some great manufactures as peculiar to herself and inaccessible to France, as the French staple is confessedly so to Great Britain. The question then is—Has Great Britain such an advantage?

The fact is so much otherwise, that in every article we cultivate, in every manufacture and every commodity worth mentioning, France is our rival and constant competitor, possessing within herself the natural means of equality in all, and of positive superiority in most branches. Not so truly in politics as in trade, is France the natural enemy of Great Britain. The East, the West Indies, the South, the North of Europe, Africa, Asia, all the known parts of the earth bear daily witness to their commercial emulation.

So stands the fact upon the face of the two countries; now let us see how far the practice

bears

bears out the theory which rises from a view of two nations so naturally constituted. It is a maxim among commercial men that trade will of its own natural operation find its own proper channel and sphere of exercise. This maxim but little supports the present treaty: for every experiment, after the trial of ages, gives decisive testimony against the practicability of a trading intercourse, to their mutual advantage, between France and England.

Here it is necessary for me to assume, that the discussion which Mr. Eden's treaty has of necessity occasioned, must have made the public conversant with many material facts, which, to avoid details, will be only requisite in this place merely to mention.

—How it came so, or what led to it, shall not be enquired now; it is enough for the present purpose to state, that Charles II. opened the trade with France—that during its existence this kingdom lost to the French, above a million annual upon balance—that the parliament in the year 1678, prohibited that trade, and voted it a nuisance—that the prohibition was taken off in the first year of

James II.—that the commerce was open until the revolution, when the trade was again prohibited upon proof of its destruction to the kingdom—that its pernicious effects were not confined to the single evil of paying a million a year upon balance to France herself; but that our whole trade to all the other parts of the world was infected and destroyed by it. The vast importations of French goods necessarily diminished the imports from the other countries of Europe; and this by the natural course of things decreased the consumption of our commodities in those countries.

It is proved upon the best authority \* that all our woollen exports, making the years 1662 and 1668, the medium of annual export during the existence of the French trade, did not amount to a million per annum, though at that time we surpassed all the world in that manufacture; and, that

\* Dr. Davenant, the inspector general, states that our exports to all parts of the world were: In 1662, 2,022,812 l. 4s. In 1668, 2,063,274 l. 19s. when the French trade was open upon moderate duties—And that our exports to all parts of the world were in 1699, when the high duties were revived, 6,788,166 l. 17s. 6d. In 1703, in the midst of war with France, 6,644,103 l.

in the very first year after the trade with France was prohibited, namely the first year after the revolution ; our exports in woollen goods *alone* was 2,932,272 l. 17s. 6d. This is a decisive and memorable fact ; but memorable facts do not stop here. For the same unquestionable authority assures us, that during the continuance of this fatal intercourse with France, our annual loss upon the general balance of our trade with all the world, taking two years of *greatest export* as the medium, exceeded two millions per annum : and that our general exports were THREE TIMES LARGER to all parts of the earth when the *French trade was prohibited*, than when we had access to the French market under the most favourable duties ! THREE TIMES larger, and even including a year of war, namely 1703, in the medium of comparative exports ! Holland alone paid us 1,400,000 l. a year when the French trade was prohibited ; while it existed, nothing : and to sum up the fatality of the commerce with France, it has been proved to demonstration, that from its first existence to its final extinction, not one year could shew the smallest balance of that

that trade in favor of this country ; but on the contrary : that every year confirmed an immoderate and exorbitant loss to Great Britain in favor of France, independent of its destructive influence upon every other branch of our commerce.

Upon the whole, if the maxim be true, that trade will find its own proper channel, the market of France does not appear from these facts to be the proper channel for the trade of Great Britain.

If one nation excel another in any branch of knowledge which it is dangerous for the one to impart to the other, there can be no equality between them, unless there exist a capacity of deriving some useful information in return, to balance, and make reciprocal, this communication of skill. No such capacity exists between France and England. To France, her staple manufacture is peculiar ; and all the art of all her people in that branch can never be of the smallest benefit to this country. This country possesses no manufacture peculiar to herself ; and there is not a glimpse of improvement, or trace of information in any branch whatever, that France acquires, which

which can fail being detrimental to this, and serviceable to that country. If this consideration does not demonstrate the impossibility of opening a trade to their mutual advantage between the two countries ; it at least, combined with the experience of past times, greatly aggravates the difficulty of such an attempt. Whence then can spring our hope of maintaining a beneficial trade with France ?

From this—that we have an infinite superiority upon the balance of manufactures—that we are sure of always preserving that superiority—and that we shall send to France, so vast a quantity of goods, as to be certain of receiving a balance in money upon the total.

How far this confidence is well founded, will appear by and by.

*Transition of Excellence in Manufactures.*

TO the generality of mankind the ordinary powers of the mind are dealt out in very equal portions; education and culture forming the chief difference between men and nations. Beings of supereminent faculty spring up sometimes, it is true; but these do not class with the common herd of their species, and make nothing against this main position—that in the general rate of intellect, no great disparity exists among the kingdoms of Europe. Many persons may fancy, in the arrogance of accidental perfection, in the plenitude of pride and self-love, that the excellence which is undoubtedly theirs at the present moment, must always continue so, although no natural incapacity exists of its attainment by others: but reason and reflection assure us there can be no warrant for the duration of any superiority which is not arbitrary and inaccessible. Arts of every sort have been transplanted from clime to clime. The noblest theatres

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for civility and science in our day, have been distinguished a few years back, by ignorance and barbarism; whilst other regions, once renowned for transcending the world in all that men deem great and famous, exhibit nothing now but scenes of desolation, or are sunk into mere sepulchres of their former glory. The most vulgar and the most refined objects alike bear testimony to the truth of this remark; which applies not more to commerce and manufactures, than to every other excellence that results from the skill of man *alone*.

Great Britain so celebrated for her woollen commodities, once sold every fleece she grew to the subjects of the Duke of Burgundy, and was supplied with that useful manufacture by a few towns in Flanders; the dreary and impoverished condition of which at this moment, shews, emphatically, how precarious is every thing that depends upon the mere dexterity of man: and where the miserable manufactures of a little lace and linen are all the traces of industry, that are found in territories that not long since were the mart of the commerce of Christendom. Wise men, even in those days, fore-

saw the danger of imparting the knowledge of the woollen manufacture to those nations surrounding them, who possessed the raw material in abundance and perfection : and great were the labours of some of the Flemmings to conceal the art—but their labour was vain. Venice formed a manufacture of fine cloth, and for a long time supplied all Italy and the Levant—She in her turn was forced to yield before the active genius of England, who soon bore all before her in that branch of business. The Levant, the Italian, the Mediterranean markets were furnished from our woollens. We supplied Spain, we supplied even France, and for a considerable time almost monopolized that entire trade. But our triumph was merely mortal.—Lewis XIV. saw with grief our superiority in so great an article. He set his people to work—he formed sheep-folds—he encouraged manufacturers from this and other countries. He set up Robay in Picardy—and Varranes in Langue-dock. He established a Levant company—he conferred on them extraordinary immunities, he gave them premiums, he made them loans, and afterwards forgave the debts. This great prince

prince enjoyed the glory of living to see his woollen manufactories not only supply his own subjects : but in foreign markets to rival England, to undersell us in cloth and pernettts in Turkey, and to drive our baize out of Spain to make room for the stuffs of France. All *this* progress was made in a *few years* of this monarch's reign ; but the manufacture soon after expanded to the other provinces, and now flourishes in every part of that vast kingdom. Woollen manufactures were set up in Salonica with great success for the ruin of our Turkey trade. Some were established in Silesia, others in Poland, and we had the mortification to see above 2000 of our own woollen manufacturers emigrate and plant themselves in the Palatinate. Still however our skill in execution, and the prodigious encrease of the home market have preserved that greatest of all our branches from ruin ; but it certainly has not that unrivalled superiority it once boasted.

Silk and paper are brought to great perfection in this country ; yet not a single sheet fit to write or print upon was made here about 100 years since, and scarcely one silk loom was there at work. Our linen man-

facture (speaking of the Irish as our own) is very prosperous : within a century, however it is a fact, that we paid to foreigners two million a year for linen alone. We paid 500,000 l. for silk, and 100,000 l. for paper—2,600,000 l. paid now to the product of our own lands, and the labour of our own people which went into the coffers of foreign nations, from our absolute ignorance in manufactures that are now so compleat and admirable among us. Tape, an article of great consumption in this country, has been, until within a few years, supplied to us by Holland ; we now entirely supply ourselves, and export great quantities. Copper-plate paper has been brought to such perfection by a British manufacturer\* in the course of *the last year*, as almost to equal even that of the French, who have hitherto solely furnished us with that article—The greater part of Europe at one time bought salt fish from England alone, and we engrossed in particular the French market. The French obtained leave in the last century to share our fisheries from the fatal kindness of one of our princes ; in a short time there were 400 sail of French ships upon the bank of Newfoundland, and

\* Mr. Lepard of Newgate-street.

independant of its signal succour to the French marine, their fish trade now maintains a most formidable emulation with our own, and yields them a million per annum. In a word, the instances that prove the transition of manufacturing excellence, would be endless to recite; and in the face of such a mass of events as history records to this point, no reasonable man *can* feel assured of preserving any superiority in any branch, which superiority results alone from mere industry, and where there exists no physical or local incapacity for its acquirement by other people.

So many interests are involved in the treaty negotiated by Mr. Eden, that its merits never can fairly be decided by the judgements of any particular set of manufacturers; and the greatest caution, if not the utmost suspicion, is obviously necessary in guarding against the opinions of any men who are likely to be interested in its establishment. A lucky hit has in an instant made the fortunes of thousands. One season, one venture, nay a single voyage, has often carried bodies of men to the zenith of prosperity. The very moment of the convulsion of trade has furnished the golden opportunity of unbounded wealth for

several

several people ; and manufacturers, as well as merchants, have sometimes aggrandized themselves and their families, by a commerce, which at the same time impoverished and destroyed their country.

Against this therefore, the most catching influence to which the human mind is liable, we must be upon our guard. The consent of men has been often obtained for the most desperate schemes, in hope of their deriving some separate benefit in the common wreck ; and as we know that the public welfare is seldom, in the eye of business, preferred to private emolument—too much doubt and diffidence cannot exist upon such a subject !—a case in point occurs to me.

It was made a condition of the annexation of Brittany to the monarchy of France, that the province of Brittany should be exempt from duties. While the trade was open between France and England, the inhabitants of Lyme Regis in Dorsetshire, availing themselves of the freedom from duties in Brittany, had been in habits of carrying on a profitable trade with that province in a particular sort of woollens in which that town happened to excel. That the trade with France had been  
always

always and uniformly destructive to this nation is true beyond all dispute; and if ever fact was clear in speculation, it is, that the treaty of Utrecht would have ruined us. Yet during the discussion of that treaty, and in the teeth of all past experience, the people of Lyme Regis made no scruple to petition in favor of "a trade with France!" which they asserted "was an *enriching trade*, useful for the employment of the people, *shipping* and *navigation*."—The exports of woollen from Lyme Regis (although in truth they were one third of all the woollen exports to France in the year of greatest export from the whole kingdom) were capable of being carried in one ship, and in one voyage; still however the good people of that town, because they happened to be among the few exceptions to the fatality of the French trade; had nerves enough to affirm that it was an *enriching trade*, and what is more ridiculous if possible, that it promoted *shipping* and *navigation*.

To obviate calumny upon a very delicate point, let me be permitted in this place to declare; that, in my judgment, there do not live in this or in any other country, a more meritorious, a more useful, or a more truly re-  
spec-

spectable body of men than the body of British manufacturers. Great however as their worth is, and consummate as may be their ingenuity and skill, the hazard is evident of being governed in a business of this sort by the opinions of those among them, who have at present a certain and signal superiority in any flourishing manufacture that is popular in France :—for they, in their respective avocations, may derive the greatest advantage from this treaty, while every other branch in the kingdom may be ruined by it. Indeed in an exact proportion to the magnitude and extension of their probable benefits by it, would be their difficulty and disability from giving a free unbiassed judgment upon its general merits.

We excel all the world in *pottery*, for instance. Mr. Wedgwood is a gentleman of extraordinary ability as a manufacturer, and acknowledged probity as a man : no flattery is meant to him in asserting that he is indeed a national blessing ; but, let me in candor ask, whether even Mr. Wedgwood would be exactly the best of all possible authorities upon the merits of a treaty, the immediate advantages from which to himself are clear, certain and undoubted ? This branch stands

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in a peculiar predicament. Other commodities find their way into France, by illicit conveyance ; but against this there are singular difficulties, “ the bulk and cheapness of pottery, render the smuggling of it impracticable ; as a whole waggon load will not amount to so much in value as a common Jews box.”

These are the precise words of Mr. Wedgwood himself, delivered upon oath before the House of Lords, on the 16th of June, 1785. His good sense will see, that his evidence is not overstretched, when only this simple deduction is drawn from it,—that as his branch has not the facilities for smuggling that other manufactures have, whose direct sale may be encreased by this treaty, he is less qualified than any other, even of these dealers, from giving an uninfluenced opinion upon this subject—speaking independently of his general character, and unquestionable integrity as a man.—Is it necessary to push this point any farther ?

Let it be observed too, that this sort of argument does not cut the other way ; for infinitely more weight is due to those whom

the treaty will destroy, than to those it may serve. The benefit to be derived to the latter, can be in no proportion to the injuries of the former ; for wide indeed is the difference between the *good* of improving the *sale* of one great manufacture, and the *evil* of ruining another altogether. If the establishment of the treaty should be the utter extinction of many branches, its rejection cannot in any shape be injurious to any ; because the manufactures capable of being immediately promoted by it, are exactly the most flourishing we have in the kingdom : and its mis-carriage can render them no other injury, than leaving them in *statu quo*,—in full possession of their present unrivalled splendor and prosperity. !!

*Danger to the Manufactures in which  
we excel, &c. &c.*

HAVING seen the transitions of manufacturing skill in general, let us now observe the particular state of those branches in which we positively possess an unmatched superiority over the French. These are the articles of cottons, hardware, pottery, gauze, saddlery—great national objects indeed; yet great as they are, it is almost unnecessary to say, that compared with all the other manufactures of the kingdom, they become trifling. If, however, in these branches we have any local peculiar advantage, and are certain the French can never reach or rival us in any of these commodities; such a certainty, though it could not of itself justify the treaty, will lessen some of the objections to it. Now, the fact is widely otherwise. Not only we have no such local and peculiar advantage, but in every one of these branches, perfect as they are, the very power we are going to trade with, must, from the nature of things, speedily, and infallibly surpass us.

Were the proof of this position to depend upon *me* alone, the principles of reason and the experience of past times may perhaps enable even the writer of these sheets to demonstrate—that we can have no surety for the duration of our superiority in these few branches while the raw materials of every one of them, are as accessible to the French as to ourselves, superadded to a thousand other evident and decisive advantages :—but fortunately for the subject and for the public, this point is established by a body of authority, that must silence and subdue the most inveterate doubts. I mean the opinion of the *Manufacturers of GREAT BRITAIN* themselves, by their evidence to the parliament of England, during the progress of the Irish Propositions in the year 1785.

From such authorities, there can be no appeal ; first, because they are the greatest men in their respective professions ; secondly, because the capacity they displayed in their examinations, and the accuracy of their testimony, must remove all question of the fullness of their intelligence upon the various topics : and thirdly, because that testimony was given *upon oath*.

To

To that mass of detail, I would refer every reading man in this kingdom, upon the present occasion. The evidence was printed by order of the house, and the publication of it at this time, would be a national service. A recital of all that was sworn by the intelligent men, deputed by the trading interest of Great Britain at that time, is obviously incompatible with the nature of this publication ; but in a few words may be stated the sum of it, and that is necessary.

—The sum was this : that present superiority was no future security—that cheapness of labour, cheapness of living, and lightness of taxes, must bear all before them, where the raw materials could be had on equal terms—that skill in manufacture was easily acquirable—that much of British pre-eminence resulted from tools and machines, the knowledge of which was capable of being conveyed away—that the excise was the greatest grievance upon manufactures in general ;—that the nature of the British excise rendered a proper countervailing duty impracticable ;—and that where these impediments did not obstruct—thither the branches must emigrate upon the accession of this knowledge.

Every

Every thing that was sworn by those gentlemen in regard to Ireland, applies, with additional force, respecting France; because the \* French pay not a great deal more in taxes, than even the little which is paid by the Irish; because living and labour, cheap as they are in Ireland, are still cheaper in France; because, though the excise is but little known to the manufactures of Ireland, it is still less known to those of France; and, because the French have natural capacities abundantly beyond the Irish, in many of these branches.

Our yielding up Tobago at the peace (a cession certainly unnecessary, the policy of which, however, shall not here be discussed) has thrown us upon the mercy of France, in a great degree, for the prodigious raw material, cotton, and a duty of twelve livres

\* Estimating the population of Ireland at about three millions, and the revenue at fourteen hundred thousand pounds, the Irish pay about nine shillings and four pence a piece. This makes not more than half what the French pay according to Mr. Necker; (chapter 10th first volume) but from the inequality of assessment in France, there are many of the generalities, (and among those, the provinces best calculated for, and most abounding with manufactures) that do not actually contribute near so much *per caput*, in taxation as the Irish do.

per

per quintal, is charged upon all cotton exported from thence. The fluctuation of the article, makes it difficult to ascertain the percentage of this tax ; but this tax, together with the commission, freight, and insurance, is calculated to be *two pence* in every pound of French cotton, dearer to the English, than the French manufacturer.

There are other points worth considering ; beside the public duty in France on all cotton which of course must be countervailed. By a grant from the crown, the Duke de Penthrieve, I understand, receives one penny per pound upon all the St. Domingo cotton, whether consumed in, or exported from France ; and, it is at least a question, whether the French will not under the sanction of this impost to the Duke de Penthrieve, lay an additional duty upon all our cotton manufactures. Such a manœuvre will aggravate our disadvantage, as contrasted with France—but indeed who can tell how soon they may prohibit the export of it altogether.

These, however, joined to the natural capabilities of France, are signal objects against

against us ; and whoever compares them with the following extraordinary facts, can scarcely feel, without alarm, for this branch of our trade. Three of the greatest, and most respectable men \* in Manchester, have, upon oath, made the following alledgments,—“ That three fourths of the value “ of cotton manufactures is the effect of *labour*,” and the difference in labour they shew by this fact. “ That Ireland undersells England in the English market, no less than “ 18, or 20 per cent, after paying freight and “ insurance, in a worked article, the raw “ material of which costs the Irish 75 per “ cent. more than it costs the English ; that “ common labourers may, in a very short “ time, become expert weavers.” Mr. Walker, than whom a more able, a more enlightened, and more honorable man exists not, further affirmed, “ that it was an in-“ controvertible fact, that linen weavers “ made the very best cotton weavers.”

And yet, a speculation has taken place in cottons—it has so—but a speculation proves

\* Mr. Thomas Walker, Mr. Peale, and Mr. Smith.—See their evidence before the House of Lords, on the 20th and 21st of June, 1785.

nothing.

amounted to no more than 5,640,506 l. leaving a clear balance of 1,147,660 l. in our favour; which *Wood* in his *Survey of Trade*, says, had increased in the years 1713 and 1714, to 2,103,148 l. upon a medium of those two years.

I am not inclined, nor do I see any reason to doubt the truth of these accounts; but as manufactures do not start up like mushrooms, nor trade and shipping increase like Jonah's Gourd, it appears to me, that these inferences may be fairly drawn from them, viz: That the Trade, Manufactures, and Navigation of England were continually increasing, from the accession of Elizabeth to the Treaty of Utrecht, notwithstanding the checks given them by foreign and civil wars; and that in no one period of that time, had the balance of trade, distinctly considered, been against this Country: That the injurious effects of an open trade with France have been most extravagantly exaggerated; and that, although the balance of our foreign trade increased most rapidly and considerably, after the importation of French

merchandise was prohibited in 1677; much of the excess arose from other causes, and is not to be attributed to that prohibition: And that it also appears from this deduction, that there is not any thing in the merchandise or manufactures of France, more particularly noxious to this Country, than in the like merchandise and manufactures of other Nations: Nor that the skill and diligence of French manufacturers are so unconquerable as to leave no hope for Englishmen to equal them in any of their fabrics; and consequently, that there is no impossibility of framing a Treaty of Commerce with France beneficial to this Country.

Under these circumstances, the Utrecht Commercial Treaty presents itself; and it is much to our purpose to examine the grounds of its rejection.

The *British Merchant* so often quoted, calculates, that in consequence of the stipulations of that Treaty, our imports from France would annually have amounted to £,712,559 l. and that our exports thither, would

would not have exceeded 270,181l.; therefore, that a ballance of near a million and a half would have every year accrued against us.

Whatever credit this calculation is intitled to, still it ought to be considered, that in so far as the articles to be imported from France would not have interfered with our own manufactures, or were similar to what we took from other nations; the injury of receiving them from France, rather than from other nations, does not arise from the imported articles themselves; but must be transferred to the superior advantages allowed us in our exports to other nations, beyond what France was to have allowed us. For instance: As we have no Wines of our own growth, it could be of no material importance to the Nation's Commerce, whither we took our supplies from Portugal or France; providing we found the same demand for, and facility in, disposing of our manufactures and merchandize in France that we did in Portugal. This, however, would not have been the case with any of

our fabrics under the stipulations of the Utrecht Treaty, and our Woollens were wholly excluded.

But besides the great defect of the Treaty, in not providing an advantageous market for British manufactures and merchandize in France; the permitting the importation of French manufactures into Great Britain, subject only to the general tonnage and poundage duties, would probably have been the ruin of our manufactures of Silk, Linen, Iron, Paper and Glass; which were then in an infant state, and by no means able to contend with those of France, which had attained a high degree of perfection; and therefore on both these accounts, the Treaty must have been highly pernicious in its operation, and every British subject has reason to rejoice that it never had effect; and more especially, as we may all have the great and solid satisfaction to perceive with our own eyes, that the trade and manufactures, and shipping of this country have increased in a most astonishing degree, since the accession of the Hanover family in 1714:

And,

And, that notwithstanding our enormous expenditures in the three last wars, our lands have been improved, our towns enlarged, and embellished; and whatever denotes wealth and prosperity has flourished beyond all example.

I shall not go about to prove what is so evident to the observation of all men; but I shall add for the comfort, as well as information of my countrymen, a copy of the lateſt estimate I have ſeen of the preſent value of the feveral manufaeturſ of Great-Britain.

	£.
The Woollen,	16,800,000
Leather,	10,500,000
Flax,	1,750,000
Hemp,	890,000
Glaſs,	630,000
Paper,	780,000
Porcelain,	1,000,000
Silk,	3,350,000
Cotton,	960,000
Carried over	36,660,000
	Brought

	£.
Brought over,	— 36,660,000
Lead,	— 1,650,000
Tin,	— 1,000,000
Iron,	— 8,700,000
Steel and Plating,	— 3,400,000
<hr/>	
Total	<u>51,410,000</u>
<hr/>	

All which fabrics are supposed to give employment to upwards of five millions of people.

When things have succeeded so well with us, and our trade and manufactures have increased so prodigiously, it must be granted, that the utmost caution ought to be used in making alterations in our commercial system ; and that no experiment ought to be tried, whatever probability there may be of its success, if its failure may be prejudicial to our trade ; unless we are urged to it, by motives of a superior nature, to that of preserving the profits of our Commerce undiminished. *Such motives* however, I do conceive there may be, and now exist,

exist, and I shall venture to assign some which appear to me, a private individual, but a sincere well-wisher to my country; so extremely powerful, as to render the experiment of a Commercial Treaty with France, not only prudent, but essentially necessary to the welfare and happiness of Great Britain: As I deem it a measure likely to remove the ancient national prejudices, which have so often occasioned hostilities between the two nations; and to promote the establishment of mutual confidence and friendship, which I conceive is, in the present situation of Europe, and of this Country, our soundest policy and truest wisdom.

This declaration will I know revolt many an honest Englishman, who has all his life confidered France as the natural enemy of his country; and many others who esteem themselves of a much higher order of politicians, will censure it as imprudent, tending to alarm the nation with a revival of the odious Stuart policy; and I shall probably be also charged by others with being a pensioner of France, and hired

to mislead my countrymen ; but as I have already avowed my utter ignorance of the Minister's views and purposes in making the Treaty, I shall as a British subject claim the privilege of shewing *my own opinion*, as it can do no harm.

Those who are so fond of giving Great Britain a *natural enemy* in the House of Bourbon, ought, one would think, to find her some *natural friends* among the other powers of Europe ; and it is much to be regretted, that none thought fit to discover themselves when she stood so much in need of them in the course of the last war : Where was the *grateful* House of Austria ? Our *firm Allies* the Dutch ? And the *most faithful* King of Portugal in the hour of our distress ? The truth is, we have been too long the dupes of our own prejudices, and of the artifices of such as called themselves our friends, and it is high time we recovered our sences.

If France has been hostile to us in her negotiations since the peace of Utrecht, it  
was

was we who made her so, by treating her as our enemy: When we were allying with Austria against her, and subsidizing every little Prince in Germany, to hold troops in readiness to attack her; was she to blame for stirring us up enemies in Asia and America, or finding us work at home? What, but the most determined prejudices, could have hurried us into the war of 1739 with Spain, which was the forerunner of the French war in 1744; at the merchant's cry of *no search* of their illicit traders, and the patriot's yell for the loss of Jenkins's ears which were never taken from him? And who will now be hardy enough to assert, that it was the interest of Great Britain, to make settlements beyond the Allegany Mountains in America; or, that we had any business to interrupt the French in establishing a communication by water between their provinces of Canada and Louisiana? Yet, what other grounds were there, for the war of 1755?

The spirit of independence, (I speak from knowledge) had then spread far and wide,

wide, though secretly, and taken deep root in our colonies; but the leaders of the intended revolt were well aware, that should the French confine the British Settlements to where the interest of England required they should be limited, the east-side of the Allegany Mountains, their favourite project could never be brought to bear.—All their arts were therefore put in practice to engage the English traders and manufacturers, to second their representations of the necessity of extirpating the French from the continent of America; and they but too well succeeded, for the general prejudice against France, and the jealousy of her hostile intentions towards this country, predisposed the multitude to give credit to every fiction of the Americans, and prevented them from entertaining the least suspicion of the secret designs of their insidious brethren.

Those two wars may therefore be fairly attributed to the absurd prejudice of the people of England, in considering France as the natural enemy of this country; and as those

those two wars cost Great Britain about a hundred millions, and many thousand people, it is no improper demand upon the advocates for eternal hostility with France, to shew the advantages the nation obtained by those wars in compensation for the heavy loss they brought upon it: Until this estimate appears, I shall adopt the witty reasoning of the Duc de Mirepoix, then ambassador from France, against the commencement of the war of 1755; “ that it “ was a great pity to cut off so many heads “ for the sake of a few hats.”

France certainly entered into the last war without the shadow of justice on her side; but while we admire and applaud the wisdom of our Elizabeth, in abetting the Dutch in their revolt from Spain, because that Power was deemed then her natural enemy; ought we not to allow it equally wise in France, to avail herself of a like opportunity to weaken Great Britain, who had held herself out to her in the same character? I mean not to palliate, much less to justify the breach of faith and unprovoked

ed hostility in either instance; but I wish my countrymen to reflect, that however France may merit the epithet of *faithless*, plain honest John Bull is not perfectly immaculate.

How the King of Spain was brought to join in the last war, can be best accounted for by those who told Count Almadovar, that orders were given by our King to intercept the Spanish Flota on its way to Cadiz; which that Minister was weak enough not only to believe, but to assure his Court of, before he gave Lord Weymouth an opportunity of undeceiving him; which his Lordship did so effectually, that the Count made all possible haste to contradict his former intelligence; but alas, his second messenger arrived too late: The French party had worked so effectually upon the King with the lye, as to overcome his aversion to the war; and the orders for commencing hostilities were dispatched, before the ministerial contradiction could be brought to detect the patriotic falsehood; I know there are other causes assigned for the

the Spanish King's entering into the war; and I intend, not by this story, to exonerate any man from his due share of culpability, who *knows himself* to have been an accessory in the fatal business.

We have been accustomed to value the friendship of foreign nations by the profits of our trade with them, and we act wisely in so doing; but why should we not open another account with them, and reckon our loss by their enmity also? The House of Bourbon is the only power in Europe that can greatly annoy us, and it is fortunate for us, that we can do them more mischief than they have to apprehend from any probable combination of other nations, without our aid. It should seem therefore the interest of both kingdoms, to keep on civil terms at least with each other; but if we go a step further, and consider them as Allies, how does the importance of every other European power shrink before them? The unstable Joseph, always the dupe of his own chicanery; and the wily Catharine ever meditating to deceive, would soon learn

Learn the wisdom of the old adage, that honesty is the best policy in all their dealings with us.—The apprehension of such an alliance has often disquieted those sovereigns, and I trust they will hereafter find more cause of uneasiness from it.

If France and Great Britain should mutually adopt the policy of living in friendship with each other, the jealousy of the former would not be excited by malicious representations of the extensive commerce and increasing wealth of Great Britain; and Great Britain need no longer take alarm at insinuations of the increasing influence, and aggrandizement of the House of Bourbon; so that the Ministers of other powers might employ themselves more usefully at both courts, than by seeking food for the jealousy of each, and endeavouring to keep alive the embers of enmity between them; which has hitherto been their constant practice, and chief business.

I flatter myself, that what I have said, is sufficient to shew the propriety of making the

the experiment of a Commercial Treaty with France: I could add other reasons equally cogent, in favour of a good agreement between the two nations, drawn from a view of the trade and policy of both countries; as I have no doubt it could be made appear, that the prosperity of both is by no means incompatible, and that their truest political interests do not clash; but this would lead me into too wide a field of discussion, and therefore I shall leave those topics for the display of the commercial and political abilities of the eloquent Members of both Houses of Parliament; and proceed to the second question I propounded, and the examination of the late Treaty itself.

Whatever may have been Mr. Pitt's motives for opening the Treaty, it must readily be allowed by all who are acquainted with the talents and information of Lord Hawkesbury and Mr. Eden, that he could not have committed the negociation to abler hands; nor could *they* have given a higher proof of their wisdom and discretion,

tion, than by the cautious measure of limiting the duration of the Treaty to the short term of twelve years ; thereby guarding against the possibility of the mischievous consequences, of either suffering materially in some of our manufactures, through an unforeseen advantage obtained by France ; or of giving her offence by seeking means to counteract it when discovered : nor is the measure less to be commended, upon the supposition of unforeseen advantages arising on our side. For, the long continuance of such advantages, could not fail to give dissatisfaction to the French Court and People ; and thereby disturb, or at least lessen that mutual confidence and friendship, which it is above all things our interest to establish.

That the circumstances of Great Britain are now very different in respect to the state of her manufactures, from what they were in the year 1713, will readily be perceived, by comparing the estimate I have given of the articles expected to be imported from France, had the Utrecht Treaty of Com-

Commerce been ratified, with the late estimate of the value of our several manufactures; for it must appear from thence, that our manufactures of Linen, Hemp, Iron, Paper and Glass, have now reached such full perfection, as to be in no danger of being overpowered, or undersold by French fabrics of the same denomination, subject to a duty of 12 per cent. upon their importation into Great Britain. Even our Silk manufactures, I doubt not, might risk the competition with the like advantage as is given to the Leather; but as France has that material within herself, and England must import it, there was much prudence in excluding it entirely from the Tariff; for to whatever height of excellence any nation may bring her manufacture of a foreign material, it will be found in the course of things, that the country which possesses the material within herself, will one day rival her in it, if the government of the latter be not greatly defective. Nor will I allow the Wool of Spain to be an instance to the contrary, for that Country was in possession of the Woollen Manu-

factory when she voluntarily drove the manufacturers out of Grenada: She has since seen her error, and her manufacture is now in a thriving state; and I will venture to foretell, that early in the next century she will find it her interest to prohibit the exportation of her Wool; a circumstance, that British Ministers ought to look forward to, and provide against in good time; and if any Treaty of Commerce be negotiating with Spain, a direction to that purpose, would be no improper article in the instructions to our new Ambassador, whose known zeal and ability in his country's service are good warrants of his success,

The Utrecht Treaty, I have already observed, made no stipulation for the admission of our Woollens into France; but that important article of our exports was left to the chance of a future negociation, which is not the case in the late Treaty, as their admission is effectually provided for in the Tariff.—And our trade with Portugal, which was sacrificed by the Utrecht

Utrecht Treaty, will probably be revived by the provisions in the present, respecting that kingdom; for we have most wisely reserved the power of giving her Wines the full benefit of the Methuen Treaty, on the condition of her restoring to us the advantages it stipulated in favour of our manufactures; and which she in so many instances, has most flagrantly contravened.

These are essential differences between the two Treaties, and intitle the latter to the fullest approbation of Parliament, although the former was justly reprobated.

As reciprocity is the principle of the Treaty, and the only important article against which I conceive a solid objection could be made on our part, has been excepted in every shape; I do not think it necessary to enter further into the detail of the several articles of the Tariff, especially as I find by an advertisement just come to my hands, that the Chamber of Commerce has taken the whole into their consideration; and as that body is composed of persons

persons the most eminent and skilful in the several manufactures, the result of their investigation must be of more authority than that of any individual : I shall therefore commit to them the examination of each particular, and only express my hope, That whatever may be their report, they will confine their publications to their *resolutions* only, without assigning their reasons ; for as the principle of the Treaty is a fair one, there is no need to emblazon, or detract from, the advantages which either party may derive from superior exertions of skill or industry ; nor are the benefits of local situation, cheapness of materials or of living, necessary to be displayed for the public information on this occasion.

F I N I S.



